

Oldham Engagement Framework

Date:
15/09/22

Subject:

Implementing a shared approach to engagement across the Oldham social support system

For Discussion

Report to:

Report Authors:

BACKGROUND

Improving the quality and scope of engagement, co-design and co-production across the Oldham social support system has been an aim since before the COVID-19 Pandemic. With the immediate response required, efforts to introduce a common Engagement Framework were paused but out of necessity we saw a widespread test and learn approach for different methods and techniques.

As a result, we now have a rich and in many cases innovative range of engagement offers across the borough. This includes the Doorstep Engagement Team, Oldham's Poverty Truth Commission, the Community Champions public health programme, the Citizen's Panel and Maternity Voices partnership, on top of pre-existing approaches such as the well respected Youth Council, Place Based Integration programme and Making Every Adult Matter partnership.

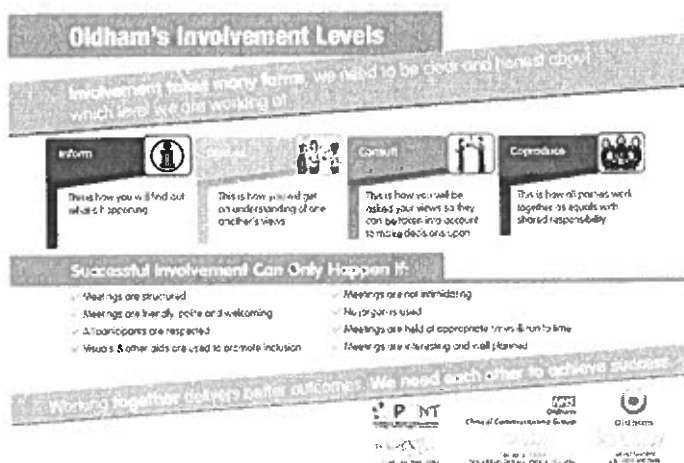
However, with existing and new crisis still occupying much of the strategic bandwidth, many of these engagement approaches exist in isolation. Resource/efforts are duplicated, with residents as fatigued by repeated asks or lack of clarity around how their feedback is applied. Without collating insights it is left to chance (and personal connections) as to whether or not they will effectively inform strategic decision making.

There is now significant potential to strategically embed the learning from the pandemic and approaches which have spread across the social support system. In doing so, we can get the maximum value from the structured and informal engagement which is taking place, and improve long-term outcomes for residents as well as increase efficiency for planned interventions.

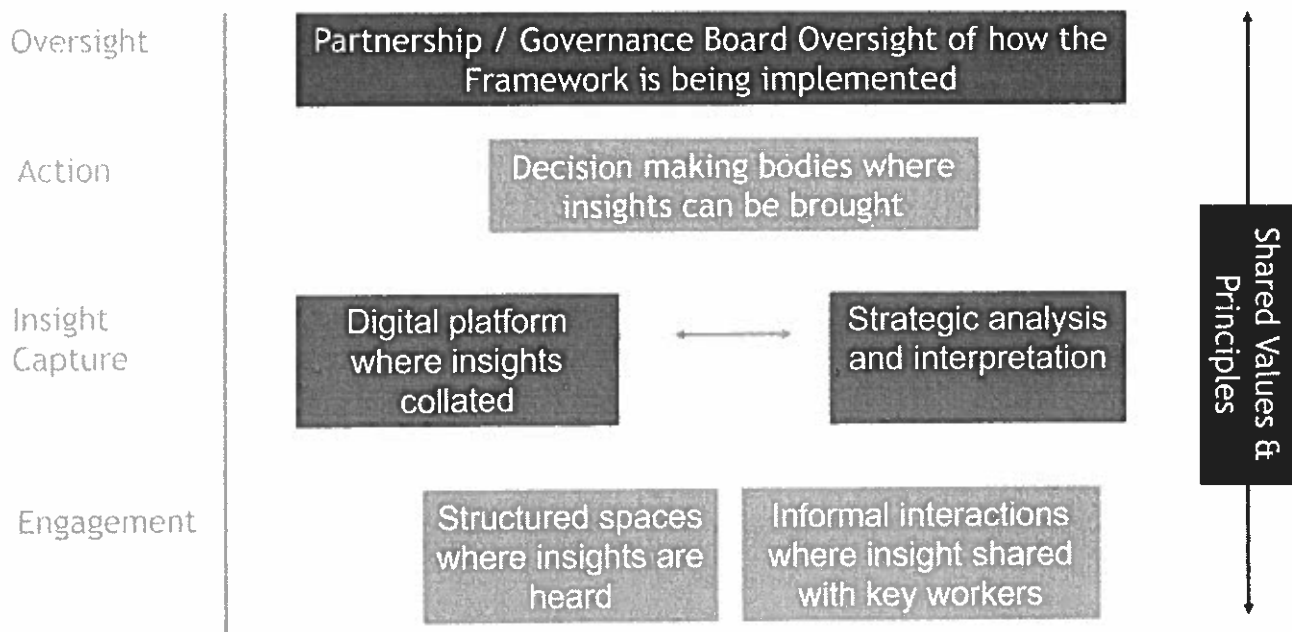
Proposed Engagement Framework

To underpin the Oldham Engagement Framework, we can draw on prior work on a local 'ladder of engagement' developing in the borough before the Pandemic.

There is significant academic and practical good practice from elsewhere which we can also draw on to inform the principles and values of engagement we want to apply via this framework, including the [JRF Ladder of Engagement](#) and example from [Winnipeg in Canada](#).



These shared principles and values would then support an infrastructure built to give confidence to the system (including funders, sponsors, and regulators), encompassing Engagement Approaches, Insight Capture, Action and Oversight.



Oldham is fortunate to have a range of tools and resources from previous experience we can draw on in developing the above, and with effective leadership identify solutions to fill the gaps required:

Framework component	Existing tools and examples	Gaps
Oversight	Resident Focus Steering Group; Poverty Steering Group	Customer Charter for principles/values; Mixed member partnership board; culture of effective engagement across the system
Action	Community Bronze, Equality Advisory Group, Community Board, Public Service Reform Board	Settled and transparent decision making spaces; space on agendas and sponsorship to hear community insights
Insight Capture	Community Champions Insight Tracker, Local Voice, BangTheTable,	Effective, open access tech solution; dedicated capacity for regular analysis; space for shared interpretation across partners
Engagement	Community Health Nurses, Doorstep Engagement Team, Citizen Panel, Poverty Network, Healthwatch Forum, Make Your Mark Survey	Ladder of engagement to identify what type of engagement is appropriate for different situations; ask of places engaging residents to apply the Framework

Recommendations:

1. That adoption of an Engagement Framework for the whole social support system is made a Strategic Priority with Executive Sponsorship amongst the Senior Leadership Team of Oldham Council, and responsibility for it's implementation taken up by a partnership board incorporating officers, elected members, residents and community group representatives.

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2. That seldom heard voices via community groups representing them are actively involved in developing the principles, values and tools underpinning the framework, so that it is designed from the start to best engage everyone in the borough.
 3. That data protection officers are involved in the process from early in the design to meet any regulatory requirements.
 4. That dedicated resource is centrally provided for analysis of insights, translation into decision making spaces, and communicating the action taken as a result, as well as investment in a unified platform that all partners are encouraged to make use of.
 5. That assessing the effectiveness of engagement approaches across the social support system is adopted as a priority by the Council Scrutiny Committee.

Questions:

How do we ensure the initial Framework including principles/values is developed in collaboration with residents and community voices from the start?

What overlap is there with efforts in other parts of Oldham, Greater Manchester and the social support system to align engagement efforts, and how might these help/hinder our efforts locally?

Does implementation of the Framework require a new governance board to oversee or is there an appropriate place within existing structures?

Is Local Voice the right platform to invest in and roll-out to all parts of the system as the shared location of insight capture?

Will any incentivization be required to encourage partners to adopt the Engagement Framework and submit insights, such as training, additional funding or incorporation into funding arrangements as a condition of contract?

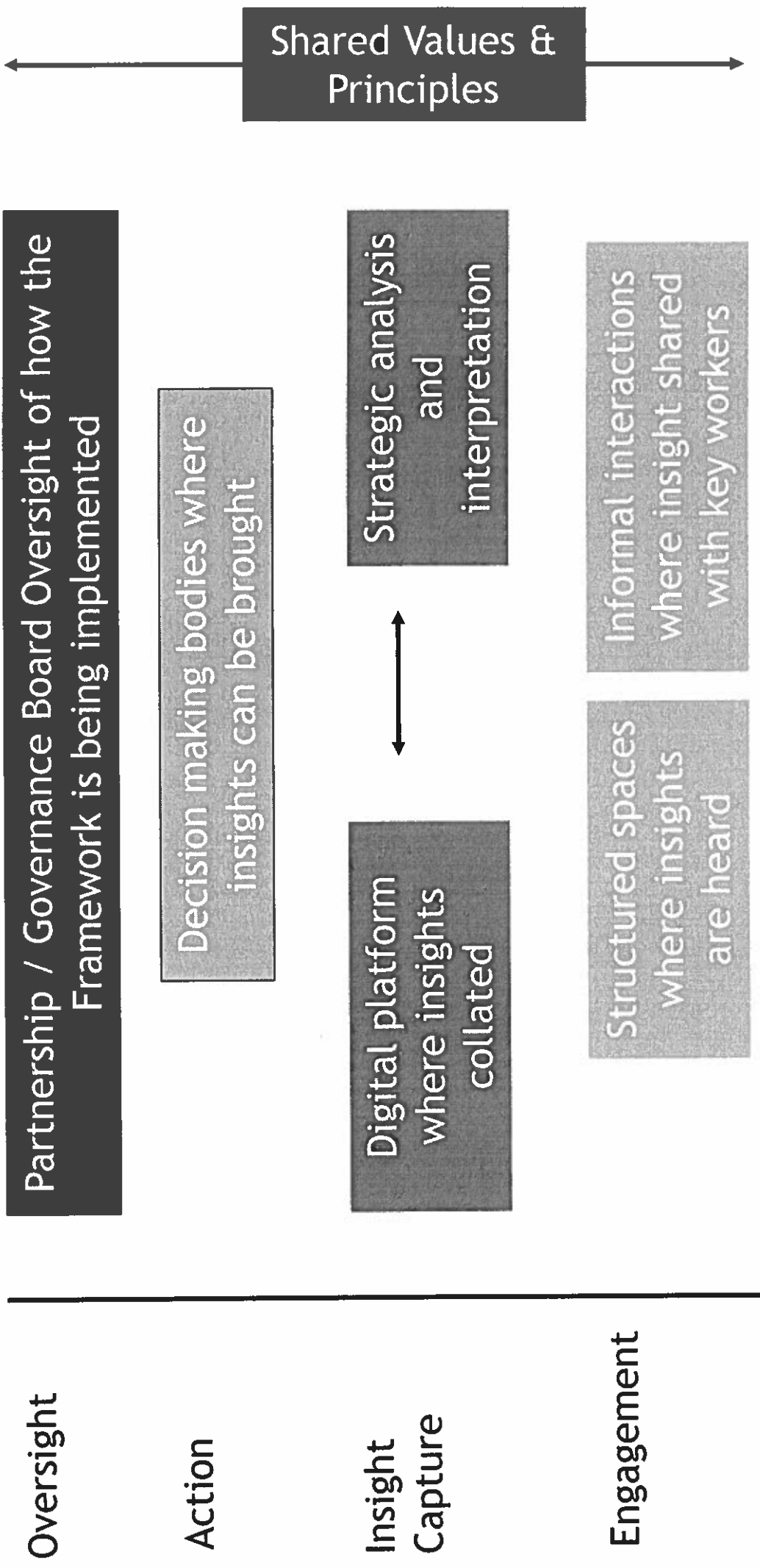
How much resource will be needed to implement this Framework and where will it come from?

Oldham Engagement Framework: A shared approach for quality resident engagement across Oldham

Why would this be valuable?

- Internal (Resident Focus strategic priority) and external (CQC requirements for Adult Social Care) drivers for improving resident engagement across the system.
- Increasing strands of engagement activity with different populations using different platforms and duplicating effort but not weaving insights into a cohesive whole.
- Excellent learning from pandemic of how engagement can happen and be beneficial for the whole system.
- Evidence (e.g. from Vaccination programme) of how decisions led by community insights result in better long-term outcomes for population and efficiency for social support interventions

What would be involved?



How would we go about it?

Oversight: empowered partnerships of leaders and grassroots community members who can set culture and hold action and engagement spaces to account for effective implementation

Gaps = Customer Charter with principles/values; mixed member partnership board to review; culture of effective engagement

Examples = Resident Focus Steering Group, Poverty Steering Group

Action: Key people / groups organising action on any given topic, where relevant insights from previous period can be shared as core agenda item influencing discussion and decisions.

Gaps = Settled decision making spaces; space on agendas and sponsorship to hear community insights

Examples = Community Bronze; Equality Advisory Group; Community Board; Public Service Reform Board

Insight Capture: Shared location where insights are added for regular thematic analysis to inform current system priorities, challenges and requirements

Gaps = Effective, open access tech solution; dedicated capacity for regular analysis; space for shared interpretation across partners

Examples = Community Champions Insight Tracker; Local Voice; BangTheTable

Engagement: encouragement and incentivisation for any engagement method to adopt the principles and share insights

Gaps = 'ladder of engagement' to identify what is appropriate in different situations; ask of places engaging residents to apply Frameworks;

Examples = Community Health Nurses, Doorstep Engagement Team, Citizen Panel, Poverty Network, Healthwatch Forum, Make Your Mark Survey

Questions

How do we develop a culture which actually does engagement effectively, and doesn't just say it's a good idea?

What can be included within the Framework design to increase engagement with seldom heard voices and those who *don't* engage with services also?

How do we encourage take up with those who don't already think it's a good idea as well as champions?

How do we balance a common approach with flexibility to meet needs of different services/offers/sectors?

What would be needed for this Framework to align to data protection standards?

Recommendations

Adoption of the Engagement Framework is a strategic priority sponsored by the Senior Leadership Team, and overseen by a partnership space including officers, elected members, residents and community groups.

Provide central resource within Communications Team for 'you said/we did' function.

Actively involve seldom heard voices in design of the principles, values and tools underpinning the framework.

Assessing effectiveness of engagement against this Framework is taken up by the Oldham Council Scrutiny Committee.

Provide central resource within Research and/or Strategy Teams for insight capture to minimise implication on individual teams.

Involve Data Protection officers early in design of the Framework